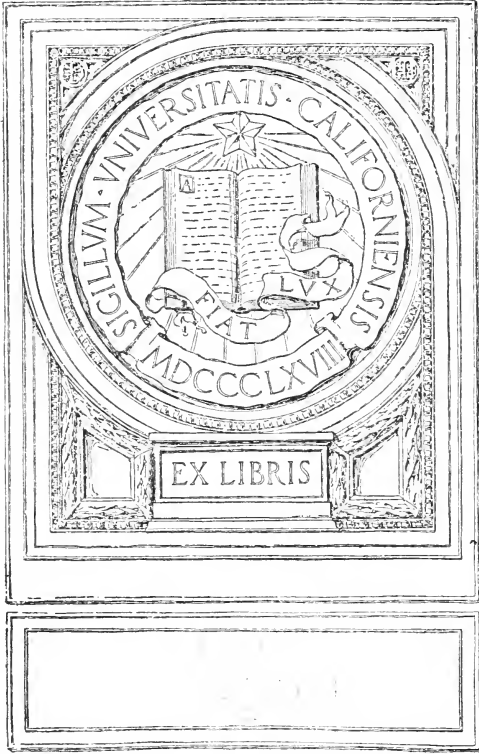


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SAILOR TOWN

C. FOX SMITH

SAILOR TOWN

SEA SONGS AND BALLADS

BY

C. FOX SMITH

AUTHOR OF "SMALL CRAFT," ETC.



NEW YORK

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I: SAILOR TOWN

SAILOR TOWN

SAILOR TOWN

ALONG the wharves in sailor town a singing whisper
goes

Of the wind among the anchored ships, the wind
that blows

Off a broad brimming water, where the summer day
has died

Like a wounded whale a-sounding in the sunset tide.

There's a big China liner gleaming like a gull,
And her lit ports flashing; there's the long gaunt
hull

Of a Blue Funnel freighter with her derricks dark
and still;

And a tall barque loading at the lumber mill.

And in the shops of sailor town is every kind of
thing

That the sailormen buy there, or the ships' crews
bring:

Shackles for a sea-chest and pink cockatoos,
Fifty-cent alarum clocks and dead men's shoes.

You can hear the gulls crying, and the cheerful
noise

Of a concertina going, and a singer's voice—
And the wind's song and the tide's song, crooning
soft and low

Rum old tunes in sailor town that seamen know.

I dreamed a dream in sailor town, a foolish dream
and vain,

Of ships and men departed, of old days come
again—

And an old song in sailor town, an old song to sing
When shipmate meets with shipmate in the evening.

THE BALLAD OF THE "MATTERHORN"

By Casey's Occidental Rooms, when the sun is getting low,
The chattering crowds of Chinatown along the pavements go,
And there you'll hear the wrangling gulls about the harbour-side,
And see the ships come in which use the oceans deep and wide,
And smell the smell o' the waterfront, the shipping and the tide.

And there do meet all brands o' folk which on the Coast are found,
From Behring Strait to Mexico, from 'Frisco and the Sound,
The Dago and the Dutchman there, with all queer breeds that be,
Stand up to drink with Jap and Chink beside the sunset sea.

And there do swear and fight and lie and leave their
pay behind
The whalers and the tugboat men and the loggers
rolling blind;
And there the Siwash and the Sikh go jostling side
by side,
And sailormen blow out and in, like driftlogs tide
by tide.

By Casey's Occidental Rooms, as I was strolling by
And thinking over this and that, and things both
far and nigh,
There chanced to meet me face to face a man I used
to know,
That sailed with me in the "Matterhorn" in a day
that's long ago.

And "Oh, Lord love you, Mike," I said, and took
him by the hand,
"Do you sail yet in the 'Matterhorn' and are you
long for land?
It's good to see your face again, these longshore
lads among,
To 'mind me of the 'Matterhorn' and the time when
I was young."

"If I had sailed in the 'Matterhorn' it is not here
I'd be,

And thirsty as the hob of hell as I am now," said
he,

"A bitter drink I'd sup among the cold and clammy
dead

If I had signed in the 'Matterhorn' when last she
sailed," he said.

"She's gone, and none but old Cape Stiff can tell
the when or how,

And them that watch the lists for her, they're tired
o' watching now;

Far down, far down in Dead Man's Bay both ship
and men do lie,

And the 'Lutine' bell has rung for her this many a
day gone by.

"I saw her sail from Salthouse Dock—the sun was
risin' red,

And 'See you next in Callao' my friends aboard her
said;

'Tween Callao and Liverpool a many ports there be,
And many men I'll meet again—but them I shall not
see.

“Well, safe we got to Callao, but we were long
a-going,
The old tub leaking like a sieve, old Horn his hardest
blowing;
The big seas swept her fore and aft; the sails they
cut like steel;
Our bodies to the yards they froze, our hands froze
to the wheel.

“And them that sailed before us came, and most
that since did sail,
They came all battered with the seas and broken
with the gale;
And one that had been missing long, with sticks all
snapped and shorn
Limped in to tell her tale ashore, but not the ‘Mat-
terhorn.’

“So last we knew that she was gone, as best and
worst may go,
The good ship and the bad likewise, the fast ship
and the slow;
A fast ship was the ‘Matterhorn’ when all them
kites was spread,
A fast ship and a fine she was—” “Aye, she was
fast,” I said.

* * * * *

From course to skysail up she soared like a mid-
summer cloud;
In all this earth I have not seen a thing more
brave and proud;
And she is gone as dreams do go, or a song sung
long before,
Or the golden years of a man's youth when they
are his no more.

And all the shining moons of youth, and all the
stars of dream
Were tangled in her topmost spars and through
her shrouds did gleam;
Now thundering like a North Sea gale, now hum-
ming faint and low,
Came singing with her down the years the winds of
long ago.

By Casey's Occidental Rooms a bitter thing I heard,
With a heavy heart I turned away, and long I spoke
no word;
I bared my head there where I stood, "God rest her
soul," I said,
As if a woman I had loved in a far land was dead.

BILL THE DREAMER

“SOME day when I’m rich (said Bill) I’m going to
leave the sea,
Sail an’ steam alike ’ll see the livin’ last o’ me;
And ’bout ship or heave her to, they’ll rouse me out
no more,
In a clean quiet cottage like I’ve often seen ashore,
With hen and chickens, daisies growin’ by the door.

“Quiet will the days come and easy will go,
Smoking of my pipe there and workin’ with a hoe,
And thinkin’ of poor mates o’ mine toiling in the
cold
That hadn’t sense to leave it an’ they growing old.

“For when all’s said and done, lads, it’s little short
o’ sin
To spend your money foolish that’s bitter hard to
win;
I’ll save my pay a year or two, and then I’ll sail no
more,
Sitting down so easy in my little place ashore.”

And so went his yarn on and so would he say—
Round the Horn with hurricanes blowing all the way,
All the way from Callao trudging home again
To the Bar light shining in the cold and rain.

But who's to keep from share and share with friends
o' the best?

And girls along the waterfront, they'll help to spend
the rest;

And the cottage and the garden and the daisies at
the door,

They went the way of many dreams when sailors
come to shore.

And he's rolling down to Rio with a drunken Dago
crew,

And the deadheads under hatches till they've got
their groaning through;

Yes, he's rolling down to Rio as he's often done
before,

And will do till the day comes for Bill to sail no
more,

When the ninth wave, the last wave, shall bring him
to shore!

THE LAST OF THE SEALING FLEET

ALL in the slime of the stagnant Arm, the mouldering
slips beside,
Where dark as sin slinks out and in the fouled and
furtive tide,
There, slowly parting strake from strake, the poor
old sealers lie,
And whisper to the jostling booms of a brave day
gone by.

Unkept, uncaulked, their gaping decks are blistered,
bleached and bare ;
Along their keels the chuckling ebb mocks at their
blind despair ;
And ever like a ghostly tune through rotted ropes
and green
Runs the shrill keening of the wind and the long
sob between.

“Oh, south away to 'Frisco Bay the open seas do
roll,
And north to the white bear's hunting grounds
about the lonely Pole ;

And at rutting time on the Pribyloffs the lusting
seals do roar,
But we'll go out by Bretchie Ledge on the sealer's
road no more.

"Oh, north away from 'Frisco Bay the tumbling seas
roll,
Both wide and free to Behring's Sea which laps
around the Pole:
A thousand miles from 'Frisco Bay the feeding seal
may fare
With never a foe but the killer whale and the brown
man and the bear.

"Yestereen along the waterside I saw my captain go,
A weary and a broken man, with lagging step and
slow;
Salt was his blood as the salt tide and restless as the
sea,
And like the sea the wild blue eye that there did
gaze on me.

" 'Old ship,' he said, 'when we were young together,
you and I,
A man's life I lived with men between the sea and
sky;

And would to God you had sunk deep and I also had
died
Who now upon the land decay as you rot in the
tide.

“By God, it were a kindlier thing to make an end
with those
Which split upon the uncharted reef or splintered in
the floes
Than to cheat death a hundred times and last to
find the day
When a man's strength must fail from him and a
good ship decay.

“And north away from 'Frisco Bay the plunging
seals do go,
But never a schooner plies that way of all we used
to know;
And there the spouting bowhead blows and the grey
gulls do soar,
But south or north though you go forth you'll find
us there no more.’”

GERRANS CHURCHTOWN

THE spire at Gerrans Churchtown, it stands up bold
and high,
It stands above the harbour and sees the ships go by ;
It sees the long tides breaking from the Gull to
Lizard Head,
The blue-lights and the searchlights, the living and
the dead.

The lads of Gerrans Churchtown, a roving breed
are they,
With their mothers' milk they tasted the salt wind
and the spray ;
The sea was first their playmate, he licked their feet
with foam,
The lads of Gerrans Churchtown that could not
bide at home.

The lads of Gerrans Churchtown, they're where
they're wanted now,
They cleave their fathers' furrow, their grandsires'
field they plough,—

A field of many acres from Scapa Flow to Nore,—
And the old men pull the lifeboat, and the young
lads watch the shore.

And will they come at long last? . . . Ay, surely
they will come,
Some day—a day to dream of—that brings the
Grand Fleet home—
From peril, toil and glory, and battles overpast,
The bells of Gerrans Churchtown shall ring them
home at last.

Will all them come together? . . . Not those
whose hearts are still
In a wider green God's-acre than lies on Gerrans
hill;
It's a brighter sun they look on than sets in yonder
West,
And a sweeter bell than Gerrans' has rung them to
their rest.

THE OULD HAS-BEEN

ALL down by the harbour a-walking one day,
I saw an old hulk by the wharf-side that lay,
Her topmasts lopped off and her paint weathered
bare,
Red rust flaking off her, and no one to care.

Then met I a man standing lounging beside,
Who scornful did speak as he spat in the tide:
“There lies an ould has-been which once had the
name
Of a seagoing clipper, a clipper of fame!

“Time was when her races, with grain or with wool,
Were the talk of the crews, ’tween Bombay and the
Pool,
When the tales of her sailing like wildfire did fly
From Leith to Port Philip, from Cork to Shanghai.

“But now who’s a glance for her, limping her round
With coal for the ferries that ply on the Sound?
And who that now sees her would know her the
same
Which once was a clipper, a clipper of fame?”

Oh, long I stood gazing there, sad to be told
How all men neglected her, now she grew old;
And my heart just to see her with pity was sore
For her, once so lovely, now lovely no more.

I marked the thick grime on her main-deck forlorn,
I marked the poor masts of her, woeful and shorn;
And all of my thought was that sure it was shame
To see such an end of that clipper of fame.

I thought of her sailing, so hopeful and proud,
The dawn on her sails like a mountain of cloud;
I thought of her battles, none stouter than she,
With the strength and the rage of her rival the sea.

Oh, better the sea that so long she did use
Should take her and break her as good ships would
choose,
Some chance of the storm or some mercy of flame
Should make a brave end of that clipper of fame.

I thought of her captains, how once they would
stand
So proud on the poop of their splendid command;
And all the good sailormen, each in his day
That loved her, and left her, and went on his way.

Oh, scattered the world through to-day they must
be,

And some sleeping sound in the deeps of the sea;
And some will be old men grown grizzled and lame,
That were lads like myself in that clipper of fame.

But no one can steal from those stubborn old sides
The secrets she shares with the winds and the tides,
The tales that she tells of the sea and the sky
To the weed and the gulls and the ships going by.

And I took off my cap by the dingy wharf-side
To the grace and the glory, the strength and the
pride,

That all were her portion who once had the name
In a day that's gone by, of a clipper of fame.

RIO GRANDE

THERE lies a ship at her moorings out there on
yonder stream;

Her lines upon the water are lovely like a dream,
And like a dream she'll slip away with the first
dawning gleam,

For she's bound for Rio Grande with the morning
tide.

Yes, she's bound for Rio Grande, and it's there that
I would be,

And every rope aboard of her is singing to be
free;

Oh, good-bye to your sweetheart dear and good-bye
to your bride

If you're bound for Rio Grande with the morning
tide!

I heard the seagulls piping round, and all they
seemed to say

Was, "Come you out, young sailorman, it's time to
come away,

Oh, heave your donkey's breakfast in, there isn't
time to stay

If you're bound for Rio Grande with the morning
tide

If you're bound for Rio Grande away, and oceans
two or three,

And ports a plenty up and down for likely lads to
see,

All across the seas, Johnnie, round the world so
wide

Going out to Rio Grande with the morning tide."

The lights in Paddy Ryan's bar they're shining on
the shore;

Bid your friends good-bye, Johnnie, pay you now
your score,

For you don't want the sight nor smell o' the har-
bour any more;

When you're bound for Rio Grande with the
morning tide.

And "away my rolling river"—for the sun's put out
the stars

A-tangle in her royal yards, and the frost is on her
spars;

Oh, the deep sea hunger's hold of her, and not to
be denied,

Going out to Rio Grande with the morning tide!

THE BALLAD OF THE ONLY LOVE

OH, have you been to the Rio Grande, or yet in
'Frisco town,
Or west away in Mobile Bay where they roll the
cotton down?
Oh, have you been in any place where sailors come
from sea,
And saw you there my only love that sends no word
to me?

Oh, does he walk with a yaller gal forgetting to be
true,
Or drink with pals in sailor-town as many sailors
do?
Does he with strangers fill his glass and to them
sing his song,
And never think of his only love—
His only love, his only love—
And never think of his own true love that waits for
him so long?

“Your man was first to go, poor chap, he was
crazed-like in his head,

Along o’ drinking sea-water, for all the captain
said.

‘I’ll marry my lass with a ring,’ he’d say, ‘when I
get in from sea,

And she shall be my only love—

My only love, my only love—

Oh, she shall be my own dear love, for I know that
she loves me.’”

Oh, cold, cold are the Atlantic deeps, and very wide
the sea,

With all its weight of stormy waves between my
love and me;

And wide and deep the tide o’ time a-rolling year
on year,

But there’ll be no parting after death for us that
loved so dear.

Oh, many a sailor will come home, and many a ship
from sea,

But never a ship on any tide will bring my lad to
me,

And the long, long days they'll come and go, and
the lonely years pass by,

But I will keep my only love—

My only love, my only love—

Oh, I will keep my only love until the day I die!

ROLLING HOME

OH, there's places up and down that are queer and
quaint and pretty;
Sydney's a pleasant port, 'Frisco's a giddy city;
But the day's bound to come when your heart be-
gins to weary
Of big cities and small, gay cities and dreary,
For an island in the sea, and the kind rain falling,
When you break the anchor out, with your heart in
the hauling.

Heave, and wake the dead! . . . Oh, if folks
would do it for me,
It's I would carry on though the gales blew ne'er
so stormy;
Oh, if I was a Finn I would whistle up fair weather
All the way from here to England . . . oh, heave
together!

Good, ah, good it is when you're young and all's
before ye,
For to leave the things you know and the old land
that bore ye,

For to know many lands and to see many places;
But the warm English hearts and the kind English
faces,
But a fireside you know and a red fire there burning,
Good they are to think about when you're homeward
turning.

Heave and come she must . . . for to-morrow's
got to find us
Laying homeward all we know, kicking up the dust
behind us;
We've a long road to travel, and the more that we
linger,
Why, the longer till we're home . . . so heave and
bring her!

Oh, we may be half a year or we may be rather
longer,
And if but the wind blow fair, then I wish it may
blow stronger;
Just a few thousand miles, or perhaps a little
further,
Just a few thousand miles till at long last we berth
her,

Till by harbour lights we know at the last we steer
in . . .

And if Christmas Day is past, why we'll bring the
New Year in!

Heave and break her out! . . . We've a little way
to cover,

But we'll go all the way gay and lightly like a lover
With a posy for his lass and a ring for her
finger . . .

Heave and break her out . . . heave all, and
bring her!

THE CHINA SEA

DID you see the poor old hooker, by the ocean wharf
she lay?

Her decks are foul with harbour grime, she hasn't
long to stay,

With her cargo all aboard her and the Peter flying
free,

And a seagull on her foretop a-looking out to sea.

She's loaded up to the fairleads and down to the
Plimsoll line,

Her bilges choked and her bulkheads sprung, and
the pumps tied up with twine,

And it's fare you well, good comrades all, for aboard
her we must be:

A call or two we've got to pay, a call or two upon
the way,

From Liverpool to 'Frisco Bay,

And all across the China Sea.

Oh, think you of us, if you will, you friends we leave
at home,

A-listing like a log in the lone Atlantic foam;

Oh think you of us now and then, ill-fitted and worse
found,
A-hanging on the skirts of luck this weary world
around.

They've changed her name and register, they'll
never change her soul;
For rolling of her innards out and eating up of
coal;
There is no ship that sails the seas can far or near
compare
With this weary worn old packet from the port of
God knows where!

She'll drown us if she can, the jade, she's drowned
her man before;
She'll fling her rusty bones and ours to roll 'tween
shore and shore,
Or chartless on her drunken way go tumbling tide
by tide
To trip the feet of merchantmen which use the
oceans wide.

They rouse us not by night or day to spend our
watch below
In getting leaky lifeboats out and teaching cooks to
row;

And if the worse should come, why then let ship and
all go down,
For we be only sailormen, and we are paid to drown.

Oh, turn you right and round about upon the
English shore;
Oh, look you long on England, lads, you may not
see her more;
And when we're out of soundings and the Biscay
gales do blow,
God help us if the cargo shifts, for then we're bound
to go.

And she's loaded up to the fairleads, and down to
the Plimsoll line,
Her bilges choked and her bulkheads sprung, and
the pumps tied up with twine:
And it's fare you well, good comrades all, for aboard
her we must be,
A call or two we've got to pay, a call or two upon
the way,
From Liverpool to 'Frisco Bay,
And all across the China Sea.

A CHANNEL RHYME

STAR Point and Beachy Head
Tell their tale of quick and dead.

Forelands both and Dungeness
See many a ship in dire distress.

The Lizard and the Longships know
Oft the end of friend and foe.

And many and many a seaman's knell
Has been rung by Manacles bell.

Gull and Dodman ask aright
A wide berth on a dirty night.

Bolt Head and Bolt Tail
Are ill spots in a Channel gale.

Over nigh to Portland Bill
In Channel fog it's just as ill.

And Wolf Rock and Seven Stones
Rest their feet on sailors' bones.

But from Nore Light to Cape Cornwall
Goodwin Sands are worst of all!

RATHLIN HEAD

WE left the murk of Merseyside, we left the flaring
town;
All smouldering red by Spanish Head the stormy
sun went down.
We saw the lamp blink out and in on the Mull o'
Galloway,
And at dead of night to Rathlin light a long good-
bye did say,
 On a bitter cold night in the morning watch,
 A little before the day!

Black deep of night without a star both sky and
sea did fill;
So cautious crept we through the dark our engines
near stood still.
All salt like tears on rope and rail the sea mist
clinging grey . . .
And Rathlin Island close to port, Kintyre to star-
board lay,
 On a bitter cold night in the morning watch,
 A little before the day!

We heard across the blind black tide the lighthouse
boom forlorn,

All night we heard a Glasgow barque blowing the
old cow's horn;

And groping slow we passed her by a bare ship's
length away—

“A near thing with the barque,” was all I heard the
old man say,

On a bitter cold night in the morning watch,

A little before the day!

All houseless stretch the unfenced fields that cold
and green do roll

Where winds do herd the berg and floe which calve
about the Pole,

Oh, peace be on the small green fields of a land
that's far away,

And on the little farms therein where folk a-sleep-
ing lay,

On a bitter cold night in the morning watch,

A little before the day!

And oh, good-bye the narrow seas and forelands
loud wi' foam!

There's many a turning in the road that brings the
sailor home;

Full speed once more our engines throbbed as faint
the east grew grey,

I turned my face to Rathlin Head, a long good-bye
to say,

On a bitter cold night in the morning watch,
A little before the day!

THE SAILOR'S GARDEN

THERE'S a soft wind singing in the idle rigging,
High tide splashing, and a young pale moon,
Lights in a window and a fiddle jigging
Over and over there the same short tune.

Oh, was it the tide along the ship's side sighing,
Or was it the singing wind that breathes and
blows,
Came like a voice across the deep seas crying,
Set my heart a-thinking how my garden grows?

Five years ago it was I planted roses,
Five years ago (the bush is grown a tree):
Five years ago, and once I've seen my posies,
Five years ago—and once they bloomed for me!

I was home in Spring; bloom was on the May then,
Birds all were building and buds on the tree!
When the birds were flown, oh, I was far away then;
When the rose was open I was far at sea.

I was home in Autumn; winds of cold November
Shaking the leaf that shivered on the tree;
Brown leaves that sighed for sorrow to remember
Flowers that had fallen and I far at sea.

Oh, many are the roads that lead you here and
yonder,

Oh, many are the ways about the world that go;
But the longest way of all's the sailor's way to
wander

To the good North Country and an isle I know.

Oh, many are the winds about the seas a-singing,

Oh, many are the songs they sing both night and
noon:

But whether it be good or ill that they come bring-
ing

The best of all's the wind that blows us home in
June.

Home, home in June—and soon to be a-going;

Home, home in June—we may not long remain;
Home, home in June, just to see the garden growing,
And then fare you well till you greet us home
again.

MARKET DAY

As I rode on the limber
Through the old French market-square,
There were bricks and fallen timber
And shell-holes everywhere.

The place was blank as Sunday,
But something seemed to say:
"To-day is surely Monday,
And Monday's market day.

"Oh, all along the by-road
That goes by Three Maids Down,
And the long, straight Roman high-road,
They're driving in to town.

"They drive the colt in the gig now
I'd just begun to ride,
And the setter pup's grown big now,
And maybe runs beside.

"The gentry use 'The Garter,'
The farmers use 'The Plough,'

And the rest 'The Jolly Carter,'
Or else the old 'Brown Cow.'

"There are crowds o' horses baiting—
There's one in every stall—
And the carriers' carts stand waiting
Outside the Market Hall.

"There's a fellow selling halters,
And another hawking cloam,
For nothing ever alters
On market day at home."

Oh, I'll shake a leg and go there,
When leave comes round once more,
And all the folks I know there
Will stand in every door.

And, strolling down the street there,
On the sunny side o' the way,
There's a lass I'll maybe meet there
At home on market day.

MOTHER CAREY

As late I went a-walking, a-walking by the sea,
I thought I heard men talking, I heard them call to
me:

“Oh, sorrow take the city streets and the weary
city stones,
It’s time for you to leave them while the strength is
in your bones.”

Ah, shake and wake her, Johnnie, there’s the ship
for you,

Lying in the Royal Roads waiting for the crew,
And every brace and backstay is singing soft and
low,

“Mother Carey wants you and you’re all bound to
go!”

As late I went a-strolling, a-strolling by the shore,
And thought of ports I’d like to see I haven’t seen
before,

Across the Strait the lighthouse kept winking fine
and free

To show me where the road is that leads to open sea.

Ah, shake and wake her, Johnnie, yonder where she
 rides,
 Lying in the Royal Roads swinging with the tides,
 Singing with the muttering tides that past her cables
 flow,
 "Mother Carey wants you and you're all bound to
 go!"

As late I went a-walking, a-walking by the tide,
 I thought my love was with me and walking at my
 side;
 So kind she did reproach me, so sweet her eyes did
 shine,
 Yet could not hold beside her this restless heart of
 mine.

"Ah, shake and wake her, Johnnie!" . . . don't
 you hear them calling
 Out across the Royal Roads and the dusk a-falling!
 Time and time for me to leave you though I love
 you so;
 Mother Carey wants us and we're all bound to go!

All bound to go, Johnnie, all bound to go,
 If it's late or early, lad, if you will or no,
 Sure as sun will rise, Johnnie, sure as tides do flow,
 When Mother Carey wants us we're all bound to
 go!

THE SHIP'S GOOD-BYE

I LEANED on the taffrail, I saw the day dying
Like a flock of gay birds round the royal yards
 flying;
High over the sunset I saw the young moon,
And the wind and the tide they were singing one
 tune.

“A hundred and fifty days out from Vancouver
(Don't you hear 'em all singing it over and over?)
A hundred and fifty days longer to roam
(Or less if you're lucky) to England and home!”

The ship took it up as she tugged at her tether,
Brace, footrope, and halliard all whistling together,
And so did the seagulls which round her did call—
But oh, my heart sang it the strongest of all!

There be many good songs we have knocked round
 the world to,
Manned capstan and halliard, reefed, shifted and
 furled to,

All round the oceans, since first we did roll
By the Straits of Le Mair for Coquimbo with coal.

All round the world, lad, to ports without number,
Chile for nitrates, the Fraser for lumber,
Where charters might offer or cargoes might call,—
But the homeward-bound chantey's the best of them
all.

“A hundred and fifty days out from Vancouver
Brings the ship to the land and the lad to his lover,
A hundred and fifty days longer to roam
(Or less if you're lucky) to England and home!”

“LET HER GO!”: A TRAMP CHANTY

'ER keel was laid in 'seventy-four

(Let 'er go—let 'er go!)

They built 'er cheap, an' they scamped 'er sore,

'Er rivets was putty, 'er plates was poor.

An' then come in the Plimsoll line,

Or I wouldn't be singin' this song o' mine

(Let 'er go!)

She was cranky an' foul, she was stubborn an' slow

(Let 'er go—let 'er go!)

An' she shipped it green when it come on to blow;

'Er crews was starved, an' the pay was low,

An' 'er bloomin' owners was ready to faint

At a scrape o' pitch or a penn'orth o' paint

(Let 'er go!)

But she's been 'ere, an' she's been there

(Let 'er go—let 'er go!)

An' she's been almost everywhere;

An' wherever you went you'd sure see 'er,

With 'er rust-red hawse an' 'er battered old funnel,
All muck an' dirt from 'er keel to 'er gun'le
(Let 'er go!)

She's earned 'er keep in a number o' climes
(Let 'er go—let 'er go!)
She's changed 'er name a number o' times
Which won't fit right into these 'ere rhymes;
But the name of 'er now is the "Sound o' Mull"—
Built on the Tyne an' sails out of 'Ull—
(Let 'er go!)

'Er keel was laid in 'seventy-four
(Let 'er go—let 'er go!)
An' a breaker's price was 'er price before
The ships was scarce an' the freights did soar;
But she's fetched 'er fourteen pound a ton
On the Baltic Exchange since the war begun
(Let 'er go!)

So she's doin' 'er bit, which we all must do
(Let 'er go—let 'er go!)
An' whether she's old or whether she's new
Don't make much odds to a war-time crew;
An' 'oever's sunk, or 'oever's drowned,
The "Sound o' Mull" keeps plugging around
(Let 'er go!)

An' when she goes, by night or by day,

(Let 'er go—let 'er go!)

Either up or down, as she likely may,

I only 'ope as somebody'll say:

“ 'Er keel was laid in 'seventy-four,

She done 'er best, and she couldn't do more;

She warn't no swell, an' she warn't no beauty,

But she come by 'er end in the way of 'er duty

(Let 'er go!)”

HASTINGS MILL

As I went down by Hastings Mill I lingered in my
going
To smell the smell of piled-up deals and feel the
salt wind blowing,
To hear the cables fret and creak and the ropes stir
and sigh
(Shipmate, my shipmate!) as in days gone by.

As I went down by Hastings Mill I saw a ship there
lying,
About her tawny yards the little clouds of sunset
flying;
And half I took her for the ghost of one I used to
know
(Shipmate, my shipmate!) many years ago.

As I went down by Hastings Mill I saw while I stood
dreaming
The flicker of her riding light along the ripples
streaming,

The bollards where we made her fast and the berth
where she did lie
(Shipmate, my shipmate!) in the days gone by.

As I went down by Hastings Mill I heard a fellow
singing,
Chipping off the deep-sea rust above the tide
a-swinging,
And well I knew the queer old tune and well the
song he sung
(Shipmate, my shipmate!) when the world was
young.

And past the rowdy Union Wharf, and by the still
tide sleeping,
To a randy dandy deep-sea tune my heart in time was
keeping,
To the thin far sound of a shadowy watch a-hauling,
And the voice of one I knew across the high tide
calling
(Shipmate, my shipmate!) and the late dusk falling.

DEAD MAN'S BAY

I THOUGHT I heard the old man say
 (Leave her, Johnnie, leave her!)
“Her course is set for Dead Man’s Bay
 (And it’s time for us to leave her!)
Dead Man’s Bay, where old ships lie
 (Leave her, Johnnie, leave her!)
When deep-sea days are all gone by
 (And it’s time for us to leave her!)”

Time for us to leave her, Johnnie, time to go!
The same seas ’ll toss us, the same winds blow:
We’ll have our fun and folly, dreaming and desire,
And she gone to ashes on a landward fire.

Ah, the grand old days, Johnnie!—wind and
 weather,
Days of sun and nights of storm we knew to-
 gether,—
The game we played with old Cape Stiff, and our
 lives the stake . . .
Turn and say good-bye, Johnnie, for old sake’s
 sake!

Long and long after, far and far away,
Maybe you'll remember, maybe then you'll say,
When you hear an old name spoken or an old song
sung:

“Ay, once we sailed in her, when she and we were
young.”

Old men nodding by a hearth ashore . . .

Old ships decaying that use the sea no more . . .

That's the way it goes, Johnnie, since the world
begun,

And it's time for us to leave her, for her day is done!

And to Dead Man's Bay she's bound at last

(Leave her, Johnnie, leave her!)

Where storm and shine alike are past

(And it's time for us to leave her!)

No more labour, no more laughter,

(Leave her, Johnnie, leave her!)

One more watch and a long sleep after

(And it's time for us to leave her!)

THE GREEN THICKET

ALL in a green thicket I heard a bird sing,
And blithe though his song was it made the tears
 spring,
To hear the bird sing as he swung on his spray,
All in a green thicket at break of the day.

All in a green thicket his song he did pour
That told of the Springs that shall come nevermore,
That sang of sweet blossoms, now faded and dry,
All in a green thicket in Aprils gone by.

All in a green thicket that morning in Spring,
I smelt the sharp scent of each young growing thing,
I smelt the sweet herbage all drowned with the dew,
And the time that's gone from me was with me anew.

All in a green thicket at break of the day
It was like the dear voice of a friend far away,
It was like the kind touch of a hand that I know,
And the smiles and the tears of dead Aprils ago.

All in a green thicket one morning of Spring,
For to smell the young woodland and hear the bird
sing,
Oh, long did I loiter and dream by the way,
All in a green thicket at break of the day.

A DECLARATION OF WAR

THIS is the yarn that M'Larty told by the brazier
fire,
Where over the mud-filled trenches the star-shells
blaze and expire—
A yarn he swore was a true one; but Mac was an
awful liar.

“Way up in the wild North country, a couple of
years ago,
I hauled Hank out of a snowdrift—it was maybe
thirty ‘below’—
And I packed him home to my shanty, and I took
and thawed him with snow.

“He was stiff as a cold-store bullock, I might have
left him for dead,
But I packed him along, as I’ve told you, and melted
him out instead,
And I rolled him up in my blankets and put him to
sleep in my bed.

“So he dwelt in my humble shanty while the wintry
gales did roar,
While the blizzards howled in the passes and the
timber wolves at the door,
And he slept in my bunk at night-time while I
stretched out on the floor.

“He watched me frying my bacon, and he said that
the smell was grand,
He watched me bucking the stove-wood, but he never
lent me a hand,
And he played on my concertina the airs of his
native land.

“And one month grew into two months, and two
months grew into three;
And there he was sitting and smiling like a bloom-
ing Old Man of the Sea,
Eating my pork and beans up, and necking my
whiskey and tea.

“You say, ‘Why didn’t I shift him?’—For the life
of me I dunno,
I suppose there’s something inside me that can’t tell
a fellow to go
I hauled by the heels from a snowdrift at maybe
thirty ‘below.’

“But at last when the snows were going, and the
blue spring skies were pale,
Out after bear in the valley, I met a chap on the
trail,
A chap coming up from the city, who stopped and
told me a tale.

“A tale of murders and hold-ups all over the land
and sea,
And when he was through I was laughing, for the
joke of it seemed to be
Hank’s folks had been acting that way while Hank
was rooming with me.

“So off I hiked to the shanty, and never a word I
said,
I floated in like a cyclone, I yanked him out of my
bed,
And I grabbed the concertina and I smashed it over
his head.

“I shook him up for a minute, I stood him down on
the floor,
I grabbed the scruff of his trousers and I ran him
along to the door,
And I said, ‘This here, if you get me, is a Decla-
ration of War!’

“And I gave him a hoist with my gum-boot, a kind
of a lift with my toe,
But you can't give a fellow a hiding, as any one
sure must know,
You hauled by the heels from a snowdrift at maybe
thirty 'below.' ”

THE PRAIRIE SHEPHERD

(BAA, baa, black sheep!—whose fault but your own
That you're here on the western prairie, herding the
sheep alone,—

Here in a wide and lonely land, by the stranger's
fold,—

Oh, rise and go to your father; he's growing weary
and old.)

* * * * *

Poets talk about shepherds, and the wonderful times
they've got

Playing tunes to Amaryllis, and all such rot!

And it might be better than nothing for passing the
time away

If you'd got a girl to talk to, or a penny whistle to
play.

I was a fool and I'm paying—I'm on a job that
would beat

The other prodigal hollow, with the husks that the
swine did eat.

Wouldn't I think I was lucky if I'd plenty of pigs
to keep!

They're sociable sort of creatures—if you've ever
lived among sheep.

All the way to the Rocky Mountains, nothing to
see. . . .

Bare and bald and droughty and dusty, and never
a tree!

Never a voice to hail you, only a hawk's lone cry
Hanging there aloft like a speck in the aching sky.

Only the dry grass stirring, only the weary wind
Seeming to sigh for the people and places you left
behind:

And I wonder how long I'll stand it before I'm crazy
and grey,

With the sheep bleating, bleating all the night and
the day.

God! will they always be at it in that everlasting
old tone,

Telling me over and over the things I have loved and
known,

Keeping my heart from forgetting, no matter how
hard I try,

The various kinds of a fool I was in the years gone
by. . . .

(Baa, baa, black sheep! . . . no one's fault but
your own

That you're here on the western prairie, herding
your sheep alone,—

No one but God around to see you, and pity your
tears

For the things you wish you could alter, back there
in the bygone years.)

TRAVELLER'S REST

WHEN you are tired of the long road and the open
sky,

I wish it may be my door that you're passing by:

I wish it may be my hearth where you will sit down

And tell your tales of the land and sea and the
strange far town.

Oh, come you in from eastward or come you from
the west,

Here's good cheer to greet you and welcome of the
best:

Oh come you with your pockets full or come you
home poor,

Here's a place by the fireside and an open door.

You'll tell me where you were since, and the things
you've seen

Up and down the wide world where so long you've
been,—

All the time that I've been here and you far away,—

And then awhile be silent, as good friends may.

And then awhile listen to the wind and rain,
Moaning in the chimney-breast, beating at the
pane,—
Dark and cold outside there, and the stormy skies,
And you sitting down here with the firelight in your
eyes.

SHIPMATE SORROW

I WAS shipmate with Sorrow in a day gone by;
We shared wheel and look-out, old Sorrow and I;
Good times and bad times, foul weather and fair,
The old grey face of him was always there.

There was never chanty raised there, never song I
heard,
But his voice would be in it like a crying bird;
I was dull in the dog watches, when the laugh went
free,
Because of old Sorrow sitting down by me.

I thought I could lose him in the stir and change
Of bright, wicked cities, all sunlit and strange;
There came a hand at my elbow and a voice in my
ear—
It was old patient Sorrow saying: "Lad, I'm here!"

And by the bustling harbour, up the busy street,
Many a time I see him, many a time I meet
The old grey face there of one I used to know—
And it's old shipmate Sorrow out of long ago.

And the watch at the halliards they may sing with
a will,

But the voice I used to hear—oh, I sometimes hear
it still,

Like a wind in a shroud piping, or a seabird's cry—
And it's old Sorrow singing out of times gone by!

THE RHYME OF THE "INISFAIL"

LIMEHOUSE way, the other day, as I did chance to
be,

I met with a hairy sailorman, was shipmate once
with me,

With his short black pipe between his teeth, and
his tarry dungaree.

I gripped him by the elbow then; he swung upon his
heel

(And oh, that deep-sea speech to hear, that rope-
hard hand to feel,

It brought me back the younger years, the look-out
and the wheel!

The way of a ship in the great waters where the
flying-fishes are,

A creaking block, and the reef-points tapping, and
a far Southern star,

And the smell of nitrates, and new lumber, and paint
and Stockholm tar).

And "What's the news now up and down?" and
"Where's your ship?" I cried,
"Greenland Basin or Martin's Wharf?" He turned
and spat aside.
"She's dockin' far from here this night on a late,
long tide.

"An' I came home in steam," he said, "I never
thought to do,
In a sooty, smeary cargo-tank, with a greasy steam-
boat crew;
An' if you'd know the why of it I'll tell ye plain an'
true.

"I sailed last June from Carrizal—no call to tell
the tale
Of every bit of a blow we had an' every Cape Horn
gale—
In an old-time Clyde-built packet that was named
the *Inisfail*.

"One o' them ships with painted ports that Gow of
Glasgow had
In the great old days of the wool-clippers when I
was but a lad;
An' she was one o' the best o' them; their worst was
never bad.

"All full-rigged ships in them days too, I've heard
old shellbacks say;

The *Inisfail* was near the last, an' she had had her
day

When they cut the half of her sail-plan down and
her mizzen yards away."

"Why, well I knew the *Inisfail*," I said, "and well
should know;

She lay with us in Taltal once, and once in Callao,
The time I sailed in the nitrate trade, a sight o'
years ago.

"A woman with a harp she had by way of figure-
head,

And shamrocks all about her dress like golden stars
were spread;

A bonnier thing was never carved." "That's her,"
Mike sighed and said.

"Ay, well, she's gone, the *Inisfail*; her split an'
broken hull,

It does not lie by the Seven Stones, the Brisons nor
the Gull,

Where many a bumpin' cargo lies an' many a dead
man's skull.

“But fifty miles from Fastnet Light, in the wide
 and open sea,
 Where the seagulls meet the homeward bound, close-
 hauled or running free.
 It’s there I left the *Inisfail* in the place where she
 left me.

* * * * *

“A shadow like a shark, I saw the damned torpedo
 glide;
 Like a sunken reef it jarred her ribs, it ripped
 her loaded side
 As the killer rips the mother-whale in the red Beh-
 ring tide.

“We did not need the soundin’-rod to try the depth
 below;
 By the feel of her beneath our feet we could not
 help but know
 She’d never fetch a port no more, an’ ’twas time
 for us to go.

“So we cast the long-boat’s lashin’s loose, we hove
 it over the rail
 (An’ we blessed our luck, as we tumbled in, it wasn’t
 blowin’ a gale),
 An’ we stood off an’ on, to see the last of the *Inis-
 fail*.

"We had not got the sail off her; with all her cloths
agleam
She looked as lovely as a bird, as peaceful as a
dream,
As she lay with her mainyard aback an' liftin' on
the stream.

"We could see the smoke from the galley-fire, in
little puffs that blew,
An' the brasswork winkin' in the sun an' the gilt
vane flashin' too,
An' the shark's tail at her bowsprit end, an' a score
o' things we knew.

"We sat an' watched for the end of her—we hardly
spoke or stirred;
'She'll maybe float,' said some one then. He scarce
had shaped the word
When she shivered an' lurched like a meltin' berg
and dived like a wounded bird.

"An' she'll never know the stars an' the wind no
more, the sun an' the blue,
Never the kiss of the Trade again, never the sound
o' the crew
An' they chantyin' up the anchor in one o' them
ports she knew.

An' no one 'll ever be cold or hungry, battered or
 sore,
 Or do a job of work aboard of 'er any more,
 Or lift a stave at the halliards the same as they
 used before.

“No one 'll doze in the black shadows when the
 moon's yellow as corn,
 Or sing songs in the dog watches, or wish he was
 never born,
 Fistin' them big courses of hers down there off the
 pitch o' the Horn.

“Nor they won't sell her or scrap her now when
 workin' days are done;
 She won't rust in the breaker's yard nor lie an' rot
 in the sun
 Like an old broken sailorman whose yarn's nearly
 spun.

“For she lies deep, the *Inisfail*—ay, deep she lies
 an' drowned,
 Farther 'n ever a wave will stir an' deeper 'n lead
 can sound—
 Fifty mile from Fastnet Light an' homeward
 bound . . .”

II: THE NAVAL CROWN

THE BALLAD OF THE "EASTERN CROWN"

I'VE sailed in 'ookers plenty since first I went to
sea—

An' sail or steam, an' good or bad, was all alike to
me;

There's some 'ave tried to starve me, an' some 'ave
tried to drown—

But I never met the equal o' the "Eastern Crown."

'Er funnel's like a chimley, 'er sides is like a tub,
An' pay is middlin' scanty, an' likewise so is
grub;

She's 'ard to beat for steerin' bad, she's 'ard to beat
for grime,

An' rollin' is 'er 'obby—oh, she's rollin' all the time!

Rollin' down to Singapore—rollin' up to Maine—
Rollin' round to Puget Sound, and then 'ome
again!

A long roll, an' a short roll, an' a roll in between,
An' the crew cursin' rosy when she ships it green!

We sailed for Philadelphia, New York an' Montreal,
Dischargin' general cargo at our various ports o'
call;

We knocked about a year or so 'tween Callao an'
Nome,
An' then to Portland, Oregon, to load with deals for
'ome.

She's met with accidents a few (which is her usual
way);

She scraped the bowsprit off a barque in San Fran-
cisco Bay;

She's shed propeller blades an' plates wherever she
'as been . . .

An' last she's fouled 'er bloomin' screw on a Ger-
man submarine!

Rollin' in the sunshine—rollin' in the rain—

Rollin' up the Channel—an' we're 'ome again!

A long roll, an' a short roll, an' a roll in between,
An' the crew cursin' rosy when she ships it green!

As on the 'igh an' draughty bridge I stood my wheel
one day,

“If we should sight a submarine” (I 'eard the old
man say)

"I'd do as Admirals retired an' other folks 'ave
said,
I'd run the old Red Duster up an' ring 'Full speed
ahead';

"I'd sink before I'd 'eave 'er to or 'aul my colours
down;
By Gosh, they'll catch a Tartar if they catch the
'Eastern Crown'!
I've thought it out both 'igh an' low, an' this seems
best to me—
Pursoo a zig-zag course" ('e says) "an' see what I
shall see!"

Rollin' through the Doldrums—rollin' in the foam—
Rollin' by the Fastnet—an' we're nearly 'ome:
A long roll, an' a short roll, an' a roll in between,
An' the crew cursin' rosy when she ships it green!

'E said it, an' 'e meant it, an' 'e acted as he said
When sure enough we sighted one abeam o' Lizard
'Ead;
You should 'ave 'eard the engines grunt—you
should 'ave seen 'er roll!
She was beatin' all 'er records as they shovelled on
the coal!

They missed us by a spittin' length—'er rollin'
served 'er well,

But it served 'er better after, as you're goin' to 'ear
me tell;

For she some'ow rolled 'erself atop o' the bloomin'
submarine . . .

An' the oil upon the waters was the last of it we
seen.

Rollin' up to London Town (an' down by the bow);
Rollin' 'ome to Surrey Docks—ain't we 'eroes now!
A long roll, an' a short roll, an' a roll in between,
An' the crew cursin' rosy as she ships it green!

BRITISH MERCHANT SERVICE, 1915

OH, down by Millwall Basin as I went the other day,
I met a skipper that I knew, and to him I did say:

“Now what’s the cargo, captain, that brings you
up this way?”

“Oh, I’ve been up and down (he said) and round
about also . . .

From Sydney to the Skager-rack, and Kiel to
Callao . . .

With a leaking steam-pipe all the way to Cali-
forn-i-o. . . .

“With pots and pans and ivory fans and every kind
of thing,

Rails and nails and cotton bales and sewer-pipes
and string—

But now I’m through with cargoes, and I’m here to
serve the King!

“And if it’s sweeping mines (to which my fancy
somewhat leans)

Or hanging out with booby traps for the skulking
submarines . . .

I'm here to do my blooming best and give the beg-
gars beans!

“A rough job and a tough job is the best job for
me,

And what or where I don't much care, I'll take what
it may be,

For a tight place is the right place when it's foul
weather at sea!”

* * * * *

There's not a port he doesn't know from Melbourne
to New York;

He's as hard as a lump of harness-beef and as salt
as pickled pork;

And . . . he'll stand by a wreck in a murdering
gale, and count it part of his work!

He's the terror of the foc's'le when he heals its
various ills

With turpentine and mustard leaves and poultices
and pills . . .

But he knows the sea like the palm of his hand, as
a shepherd knows the hills.

He'll spin you yarns from dawn to dark . . .and
half of 'em are true!

He swears in a score of languages, and maybe talks
in two! . . .

And he'll lower a boat in a hurricane to save a
drowning crew!

A rough job or a tough job—he's handled two or
three,

And what or where he won't much care, nor ask what
the risk may be . . .

For a tight place is the right place when there's wild
weather at sea!

THE YOUNGER SON

THE Younger Son he's earned his bread in ways
both hard and easy
From Parramatta to the Pole, from Yukon to
Zambesi;
For young blood is roving blood, and a far road's
best,
And when you're tired of roving there'll be time
enough to rest!

And it's "Hello" and "How d'ye do?" "How's the
world been using you?
Thought you were in Turkestan or China or
Peru!"—
It's a long trail in peace-time where the roving
Britons stray . . .
But in war-time, in war-time, it's just across the
way!

He's left the broncos to be bust by who in thunder
chooses;
He's left the pots to wash themselves in Canada's
caboozes;

He's left the mine and logging camp, the peavie,
pick and plough,
For young blood is fighting blood, and England
needs him now!

And it's "Hello" and "How d'ye do?" "Who'd ha'
thought of meeting you!
What's the news of Calgary, Quebec and Cariboo?"
It's a long trail in peace-time where the roving
Britons stray,
But in war-time, in war-time, it's just across the
way!

He's travelled far by many a trail, he's rambled
here and yonder,
No road too rough for him to tread, no land too
wide to wander;
For young blood is roving blood, and the spring
of life is best,
And when all the fighting's done, lad, there's time
enough to rest.

And it's good-bye, tried and true, here's a long
farewell to you
(Rolling stone from Mexico, Shanghai or Timbuc-
too)!

Young blood is roving blood, but the last sleep is
best,
When the fighting all is done, lad, and it's time to
rest!

THE NORTH SEA GROUND

OH, Grimsby is a pleasant town as any man may
find,

An' Grimsby wives are thrifty wives, an' Grimsby
girls are kind;

An' Grimsby lads have never yet been lads to lag
behind

When there's men's work doin' on the North
Sea ground.

An' it's "Wake up, Johnnie" . . . for the high
tide's flowin',

An' off the misty waters a cold wind blowin';

Skipper's come aboard, an' it's time that we were
goin',

An' there's fine fish waitin' on the North
Sea ground!

Soles in the Silver Pit . . . an' there we'll let 'em
lie!

Cod on the Dogger . . . oh, we'll fetch 'em by an'
by!

War on the waters . . . an' it's time to serve an'
die,

For there's wild work doin' on the North Sea
ground.

An' it's "Wake up, Johnnie" . . . they want you
at the trawlin'

(With your long sea-boots an' your tarry old tar-
paulin);

All across the bitter seas duty comes a-callin',

In the winter's weather off the North Sea
ground.

It's well we've learned to laugh at fear (the sea has
taught us how);

It's well we've shaken hands with death—we'll not be
strangers now,

With death in every climbin' wave before the
trawler's bow,

An' the black spawn swimmin' on the North
Sea ground.

Good luck to all our fightin' ships that rule the Eng-
lish sea;

Good luck to our brave merchantmen wherever they
may be;

The Sea it is their highway, and we've got to sweep
it free

For the ships passing over on the North Sea
ground.

An' it's "Wake up, Johnnie" . . . for the sea
wind's cryin',

"Time an' time to go where the herrin' gulls are
flyin'"—

An' down below the stormy seas the dead men lyin',
Oh, the dead lyin' quiet on the North Sea
ground!

ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE

WHITE Star, Cunard,
Great ships and small—
Gallant British merchantmen,
Here's to each and all!
Union Castle, Orient,
From Shankhai to Dover,
Fighting British merchantmen
All the world over!

* * * * *

What is the house-flag? . . .
The same that's yours and mine—
In fair weather and foul weather
The flag of the British Line!

What trade is this ye sail in? . . .
An ancient trade and bold;
Drake's trade, Blake's trade
It was in days of old—

To mar the might of tyrants,
To keep the highway free,

And hold against all comers
The lordship of the sea!

Whence comes your right of service? . . .
By right of breed and birth!
And where had ye your schooling? . . .
In all the seas of earth;

'Tween the Lizard and Cape Leeuwin,
From the Fastnet to the Horn,
We learnt the stern old lessons
None learn but seamen born.

What cargo do ye carry? . . .
Full freight of death and fame,
And the men of the White Ensign
Of the Red shall think no shame!

When the day is darkened with battle,
And the seas are sown with the dead,
The pride of the White Ensign
Shall be the pride of the Red!

Honour and pride both far and wide,
Where'er the salt tides run,
And a long sleep, the last sleep,
For them whose watch is done!

* * * * *

Cunard, White Star,
Great ships and small—
Gallant British merchantmen,
Here's to each and all!
Royal Mail, P. and O.,
From Shanghai to Dover,
Fighting British merchantmen
All the world over!

THE "ORION'S" FIGUREHEAD AT
WHITEHALL

ALL wind and rain, the clouds fled fast across the
evening sky—

Whitehall aglimmer like a beach the tide has late left
dry—

And there I saw the figurehead which once did grace
the bow

Of the old bold "Orion"—

The fighting old "Orion" in the days that
are not now.

And I wondered did he dream at all of those great
fights of old

And ships from out whose oaken sides Trafalgar's
thunder rolled;

There were "Ajax," "Neptune," "Temeraire,"
"Revenge," "Leviathan,"

With the old bold "Orion"—

The fighting old "Orion" when "Victory"
led the van.

Old ships, their ribs are ashes now . . . but still
the names they bore

And still the hearts that manned them live to sail
the seas once more—

To sail and fight, and watch and ward, and strike
as stout a blow

As the old bold “Orion,”

The fighting old “Orion” in the wars of
long ago.

They watch, the grey and silent ships, like death as
bleak and stern;

They wait (not yet, not yet has dawned the day for
which they burn):

They’re ware and waiting for the word that sets
their thunders free,

Like the old bold “Orion,”

The fighting old “Orion” when Nelson
sailed the sea.

Oh, waiting is a weary game—but Nelson played it
too!

And be it late or be it soon, such work is yet to do
Your starry namesake never saw who walked the
midnight sky

(Old bold “Orion”—

Fighting old “Orion”!) in the great old
years gone by.

And be the game a waiting game we'll play it with
the best;

Or be the game a watching game we'll watch and
never rest;

But the fighting game it pays for all when the guns
begin to play

(Ah, bold "Orion"—

Fighting old "Orion"! as you heard 'em
yesterday!).

THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL

I RODE into Pincher River on an August afternoon—
The pinto's hoofs on the prairie drumming a drowsy
tune—

By the shacks and the Chinks' truck-gardens to the
Athabasca Saloon.

And a bunch of the boys was standing around by
the old Scotch Store,
Standing and spitting and swearing by old Mac-
allister's door,
And the name on their lips was Britain—the word
that they spoke was "War"!

War! . . . Do you think I waited to talk about
wrong or right
When I knew my own old country was up to the
neck in a fight?
I said "So long"—and I beat it—"I'm hitting the
trail to-night!"

I wasn't long at my packing; I hadn't much time
to dress;

And the cash I had at disposal was a ten-spot (more
or less),

So I didn't wait for my ticket—I booked by the
hoboes' express.

I rode the bumpers at night-time; I beat the ties in
the day,

Stealing a ride and humming a ride all of the bloom-
ing way,

And . . . I left the First Contingent drilling at
Valcartier!

I didn't cross in a liner (I hadn't my passage by
me!)

I spotted a Liverpool cargo tramp, smelly and
greasy and grimy,

And she wanted hands for the voyage, and the old
man guessed he'd try me.

She kicked like a ballet dancer or a range-bred
bronco mare;

She rolled till her engines rattled—she wallowed,
but what did I care?

It was, "Go it, my bucking beauty, if only you'll
take me there!"

Then . . . came an autumn morning, grey-blue,
windy and clear,
And the fields—the little white houses—green, and
peaceful, and dear—
And the heart inside o' me saying: "Take me,
Mother, I'm here!

"Here, for I thought you'd want me; I've brought
you all that I own,
A lean long lump of a carcass that's mostly muscle
and bone—
Six foot two in my stockings—weigh-in at fourteen
stone!

"Here, and I hope you'll have me—take me for
what I'm worth,
A chap that's a bit of a waster, come from the ends
of the earth,
To fight with the best that's in him for the dear old
land of his birth!"

CAPTAIN PAUL JONES

CAP'N PAUL JONES was a Britisher born, he hailed
from the Solway shore,
But he struck a snag with his folks at home, as
many have done before;
He shook the old land's dust from his feet, and he
gave her a piece of his mind,
But he never knew that he'd somehow left a bit of his
heart behind.

Cap'n Paul Jones was a skipper of fame, and a
darned good sailorman too,
And a bit of a bucko, as I've heard tell, in the way
he handled his crew:
He learned 'em to drill and he learned 'em to shoot
and to jump at the word o' command,
The same as he knew how they learned 'em to do in
the ships of his native land.

Cap'n Paul Jones was a Britisher born, though he
changed his flag and his name,
In his "Ranger" frigate he led us a dance, but we
honour him all the same;

We used to call him a pirate then, and he certainly
wasn't our friend,
But he sailed and he fought as a Britisher ought,
which is what matters most in the end.

Cap'n Paul Jones was a Britisher born, which is
why, now the time has come,
He knows the tug of the Solway tide, and the rattle
of Drake's old drum;
He is back to the sea in the old, old way, a sailor-
man smart and bold,
And the flag o' the "Ranger" is flying to-day by the
flag that she fought of old.

THE BALLAD OF THE HUN KING'S DREAM

ABOUT the dead dark o' the night,
Ere the first cock clapped his wing,
The Hun Lord's soul had wandered far—
A shrunk and wizened thing—

Beyond Polaris and the Plough,
And the cold Northern Crown,
Where white in space the Milky Way
O'er the lip of space pours down.

East o' the Sun, West o' the Moon,
In a twilit land walked he,
The same where vagrant souls do range
When sleep has set them free—
And a shadowy guide went at his side
Whose face he might not see.

And first there was a place of thorns,
And then a salt sea-shore,

And then a river dark and wide
That no man might cross o'er;
And the wind blew, the wind blew
As it could blow no more.

“What thorns be these, so long and keen,
That bite me to the bone?” . . .
Oh, these be thorns of hate and lies
Which you on earth have sown.

“What sea is this before my feet
That has so salt a tide?”
Oh, that is the flood of women's tears
That fall and are not dried;
They weep, and, weeping, name his name
Through whom their dear ones died.

“What stream is this so dark and deep
That laps me to the chin?” . . .
Oh, that is the river of men's blood
Who perished by your sin.

There is no boat shall ferry you,
No ford shall bring you through
The red river that runs always
Between your God and you.

There was no light in all that land
But the far glare of Mars;
And the wind blew, the wind blew,
It shook the fixed stars.

And in that wind the shivering soul
Like a dry leaf was driven . . .
“What wind is this, what fearful wind,
That rocks the stars in Heaven?”

Oh, that is the breath of a dead mother
With a dead babe at her side,
Beneath your iron heel who lay,
And cursed you as she died!

NEWFOUNDLAND'S GIFT

GIFTS from a full garner—wealth from a brimming
store—

How shall these things be offered from a seagirt land
and poor?

I—who have neither gold nor jewels, cattle nor
corn—

I (says Newfoundland) give the lads I have borne!

Toll o' the Banks when the white fog spins a shroud
there,

Toll o' the Gulf when the Fundy gales are loud
there,

Toll o' the ice-pack grinding south by Labrador—
These things have I paid . . . yet will not grudge
my part in war.

Bone o' my bone—and in bitter pain I bare them!
Blood o' my blood—oh, it's cruel hard to spare
them!

Splendid sons of seamen—more than life to me—
No new thing is sacrifice to them which use the sea!

Salt is the sea-crust on our land's wave-fretted
shore;

Salt, salt seas, they bring our seamen home no more,
Salt, salt winds, they'll blow them home no more to
me—

Well we know the taste of it whose menfolk use the
sea!

Bone o' my heart—and the salt sad tides roll over
them;

Heart o' my heart—oh, the wide, cold seas 'll cover
them!

Gold and gear I give not . . . life and love and
all to me,

These I give to England . . . to England and the
sea!

ST. PATRICK'S DAY IN THE MORNING

OH, where is the lad that's far away? . . .
And what of the one that sails the sea? . . .
Oh, how will they keep Saint Patrick's Day,
 Saint Patrick's Day in the morning?

There's some will hear the great guns' din
At the break o' day their tune begin,
And the snipers welcome the daylight in
 On Patrick's Day in the morning.

And be they far or be they near,
Upon that day they'll keep good cheer,
And make the foe that meets them fear
 On Patrick's Day in the morning.

There's some will watch the fleet that lurks
By harbour, mine and fortress works,
And some will hammer the heathen Turks
 On Patrick's Day in the morning.

Oh, far and near their watch is set,
But be they cold, or be they wet,
Will there a man of them all forget
 Saint Patrick's Day in the morning?

Ay, some there'll be so sound who sleep
In the fields o' France or the waters deep,
They will not know that their kinsmen keep
 Saint Patrick's Day in the morning.

Sweet is the sleep of them, far away ;
And how should they heed if a man should say :
"Oh, don't you remember Saint Patrick's Day,
 Saint Patrick's Day in the morning?"

THE HAPPY WARRIOR

(*April 23rd*)

I

HERE, a soldier plain, I kneel,
Sword on thigh, spur on heel.

If I fall or if I stand,
Lord, my times are in Thy hand.

Three things beneath the sun,
These I'll ask, and so have done.

Clean hand, clean sword,
And a clean heart to serve Thee, Lord!

II

When Spring's turned and Winter's done,
Life in every bough does run.

Very sweet the Spring sky . . .
Shall a man desire to die,

Die, and be no more seen
Where streams run and fields are green,

And the birds do sing shrill
Mating songs in April?

Should a man not fear to fall,
Lord, Lord . . . if life were all? . . .

ARMED MERCHANTMEN: AN OLD SONG
RE-SUNG

By the Liverpool Docks at the break of the day,
I saw a flash packet, bound westward away;
And well did I mark how each new-mounted gun
Like silver did gleam in the first morning sun.

Bound away, bound away, where the wide waters
 flow,
She's a Liverpool packet—oh, Lord, let her go!

For thieves be abroad on the ocean highway
To harass our traders by night and by day;
But let such attempt her, to take or assail,
They may find to their cost she's a sting in her
 tail.

She's a crack ocean liner—now catch her who
 can!—

Her crew are true British and game to a man;
The pirates of Potsdam had best have a care—
She's the Navy's stepdaughter, and touch her
 who dare!

Bound away, bound away, with a bone in her mouth,
She passes the Bar light, she turns to the south,
A Liverpool packet that stays for no foe—
Safe, safe on her journey, oh, Lord, let her go!

Bound away, bound away, where the wide waters
 flow,
She's a Liverpool packet—oh, Lord, let her go!

STORMY DUSK

TO-NIGHT the dark came stormy down,
The sun went red to rest;
And fleets of clouds like battleships
Filled all the burning West.
The wind was rising to a gale,
It howled in hedge and tree . . .
And it's cold, bitter cold,
Where our sailormen must be,
Oh, it's bitter cold this night
In the wild North Sea!

To-night I heard the church clock strike
Across the gusts of storm . . .
And I thought how go the hours at sea
While we are sheltered warm . . .
I prayed God guard our ships at sea
And keep them from all harm. . . .
And guide them through the pitch-black tides
Where the drifting death may be,
And give them soon a safe return
And a fruitful victory. . . .

And Christ our Lord who walked of old
On waves of Galilee,
Be near our men this night
In the wild North Sea!

THE LOWLAND SEA

OH, sailed you by the Goodwins,
Oh, came you by the Sound?
And saw you there my true love,
That was homeward bound?

“Oh, never will he anchor
Again in English ground;
A-sailing by the Lowlands
Your sailorman is drowned.

“They gave his ship her death-blow
As she was sailing by,
And every soul aboard her,
Oh, they left them all to die.

“They were not common pirates
Nor rovers of Sallee . . .
But gentlemen of high estate
Come out of Germanie!”

It was no worthy gentleman,
 Though he were crownéd King;
It was no honest seaman
 That wrought so vile a thing.

But the foulest of all pirates
 That ever sailed the sea . . .
And they should swing as pirates swing
 Upon the gallows, tree,
A-sailing by the Lowlands
 That took my lad from me!

THE TRAVELLER

I'VE loops o' string in the place o' buttons, I've
mostly holes for a shirt;
My boots are bust and my hat's a goner, I'm gritty
with dust an' dirt;
An' I'm sittin' here on a bollard watchin' the China
ships go forth,
Seein' the black little tugs come slidin' with timber
booms from the North,
Sittin' an' seein' the broad Pacific break at my feet
in foam . . .
Me that was born with a taste for travel in a back
alley at home.

They put me to school when I was a nipper at the
Board School down in the slums,
And some of the kids was good at spellin' and some
at figures and sums;
And whether I went or whether I didn't they learned
me nothin' at all,
Only I'd watch the flies go walkin' over the maps on
the wall,

Strollin' over the lakes an' mountains, over the plains
 an' sea,—

As if they was born with a taste for travel . . .
 somethin' the same as me!

If I'd been born a rich man's youngster with lots o'
 money to burn,

It wouldn't ha' gone in marble mansions and statues
 at every turn,

It wouldn't ha' gone in wine and women, or dogs an'
 horses an' play,

Nor yet in collectin' bricks an' bracks in a harmless
 kind of a way.

I'd ha' paid my fare where I've beat my way (but I
 couldn't ha' liked it more!),

Me that was born with a taste for travel—the same if
 you're rich or poor.

I'd ha' gone bowlin' in yachts and rollin' in plush-
 padded Pullman cars,—

The same as I've seen 'em when I lay restin' at night-
 time under the stars,

Me that have beat the ties and rode the bumpers
 from sea to sea,

Me that have sweated in stokeholds and dined off
 mouldy salt-horse and tea;

Me that have melted like grease at Perim and froze
like boards off the Horn,
All along of a taste for travel that was in me when I
was born.

I ain't got folks an' I ain't got money, I ain't got
nothing at all,
But a sort of a queer old thirst that keeps me movin'
on till I fall,
And many a time I've been short o' shelter and many
a time o' grub,
But I've got away from the rows o' houses, the
streets, an' the corner pub—
And here by the side of a sea that's shinin' under
a sky like flame,
Me that was born with a taste for travel, give thanks
because o' the same.

SALVAGE

Not the encounter of navies in battle array—
The roar of the salvoes—the smoke-wrack that
darkens the day—
*But a mined ship with her forepeak full
Off the Foreland, wanting towing . . .*

Not the white flame of the searchlights, the red glare
between,
The heaven-splitting thunder and roar of the struck
magazine—
*But a fog rolling up Channel as white as wool,
And never a light showing . . .*

Not the fierce dash of destroyers—the bow-wave
like snow—
The track of the headlong torpedo launched swift
on the foe—
*But a ship aground off the Long Sand light,
And a hell of a gale blowing . . .*

Not the stern splendour of battle, the glory, the
fame,

Not the awarding of honours, the nation's acclaim,
*But a crew and a cargo to take off by night,
And the light fast going . . .*

*(But only the duty and deed—whose reward is in
no man's bestowing!)*

WAR RISKS

“LET go aft!” . . . and out she slides,
Pitching when she meets the tides . . .
She for whom our cruisers keep
Stately vigil in the deep . . .
Sink or swim, lads, war or no,
Let the poor old hooker go!

Soon, hull down, will England's shore,
Smudged and faint, be seen no more;
Soon the following gulls return
Where the friendly dock-lights burn;
Soon the cold stars, climbing high,
March across the empty sky . . .
Empty seas before her bow
(Lord, she's on her lonesome now!).

When the white fog, stooping low,
Folds in darkness friend and foe . . .
When the fast great liners creep
Veiled and silent through the deep . . .

When the hostile searchlight's eye
Sweeps across the midnight sky . . .
Lord of light and darkness, then
Stretch Thy wing o'er merchantmen!

When the waters known of old
Death in dreadful shape may hold . . .
When the mine's black treachery
Secret walks the insulted sea . . .
(Lest the people wait in vain
For their cattle and their grain)
Since Thy name is mercy, then,
Lord, be kind to merchantmen!

THE PIRATE'S ONLY DELIGHT

HEY, bullies, ho, bullies, what have ye seen,
Flying with the seagulls where the seas are green?

Oh, I saw a ship a-sinking,
And the sight it pleased me well
(Says Teach the pirate, drinking
Red wine in Hell).

Hey, bullies, ho, bullies, what about the crew?
There were men that watched 'em drowning as we
often used to do.

A fine sport for sharing,
A rare tale to tell
(Says Teach the pirate, baring
Yellow fangs in Hell).

Hey, bullies, ho, bullies, saw you aught beside?
Oh, we saw a drowned girl there drifting on the tide!

A sight to split you laughing,
A sweet thing to tell
(Says Teach the pirate, quaffing
Red wine in Hell).

CLARE'S BRIGADE

MEN of the old grievous battles, men of Clare's
Brigade,

Do ye hear the troops marching through the land
where ye are laid,

Far from the clear running brooks, the dappled sun
and shade

On the fair green hills of holy Ireland?

Ah, but not in the old fashion (men of Clare's
Brigade!),

Not in the sorrow of exile your kinsmen draw the
blade,

For the old trouble's ended now, its grey ghost is
laid

On the fair green hills of holy Ireland.

There shall be pride and love there where sorrow
dwelt before;

Kind peace shall be her portion, ay, peace from
shore to shore,

And Patrick's plant springing there, springing ever
more

On the fair green hills of holy Ireland!

THE RECRUIT

BAT and ball are there, lad,
And you not there to play . . .
“There’s a nobler game playing
For English lads to-day.”

And if your mates miss you
As they are like to do? . . .
“If my mates were men, lad,
They’d ha’ ’listed too.”

What will your dad say
That is old and grey? . . .
“Oh, he’d give life and all, lad,
To be young this day.”

Was your mother not weeping
As you marched away? . . .
“Ay, weeping she kissed me
As a lad’s mother may.”

And what'll your girl say then
That used to walk with you? . . .
"Perhaps she'll walk lonely
For she loves me true.

"But parents both and sweetheart,
All have said the same—
'If you hadn't gone, lad,
I'd ha' died for shame!'"

THE KNITTERS

IN streets that are humming
 With the city's stair . . .
Or where leaves fall rustling
 Through the quiet air . . .
There are women knitting
 Everywhere . . .

Knitting and waiting
 Through hours like years—
Not with loud grieving
 Nor sighing nor tears—
In their hands the needles
 Flash like spears.

Every thread a sorrow,
 Every strand a prayer—
(“Oh, where sleeps my dear one?
 Or how does he fare?”)
There are women knitting
 Everywhere . . .

THE MOUTH-ORGAN

OH, there ain't no band to cheer us up, there ain't
no 'Ighland pipers
To keep our warlike ardure warm round New Cha-
pelle an' Wipers;
So—since there's nothin' like a tune to glad the
'eart o' man—
Why, Billy with 'is mouth-organ 'e does the best 'e
can.

There ain't no birds in Plug Street Wood, the guns
'ave sent 'em flyin',
An' there ain't no song to 'ear except the squealin'
shells a-cryin';
The thrushes all 'ave 'ooked it, an' the blackbirds
'ad to flit . . .
So Billy with 'is mouth-organ 'e ups an' does 'is bit.

'Is notes is somewhat limited, they are not 'igh an'
soary;
'E 'asn't got that many things in 'is bloomin' re-
pertory;
—132—

But when 'e's played the lot, why, then 'is course is
straight an' plain,

'E starts at the beginnin' an' 'e plays 'em all again!

'E's played 'em oft upon the march, an' likewise in
the trenches;

'E's played 'em to the Gurkhas, an' 'e's played 'em
to the Frenchies;

'E may be ankle-deep in dust or middle-deep in
slime,

But Billy with 'is mouth-organ 'e's at it all the time.

Wet, 'ungry, thirsty, 'ot or cold, whatever may be-
tide 'im,

'E'll play upon the 'ob of 'ell while the breath is
left inside 'im;

And when we march up Potsdam Street an' goose-
step through Berlin,

Why, Billy with 'is mouth-organ 'e'll play the Army
in!

THE FURROW

AN old horse to the furrow—an old man to the
plough—

For the young horse and the young lad, they're
needed yonder now—

The horse, so young and mettled he scarce had
known the rein,

That shook his feathered fetlocks and tossed his
streaming mane—

The lad that used to drive him, so strong and
straight and tall,

That dressed him fine with ribbons and groomed
him in the stall.

Ah, there as here, old Captain, we know, both I and
you,

He'll drive a straight furrow as he always used to
do!

The clods before the ploughshare fall heavily apart,
But never a clod among them so heavy as my heart,

To smell the clean earth breaking and the kind
country smells,
And think o' the stink and reek there, and the
bursting o' the shells.

An old horse to the furrow—an old man to the
plough—
And the young horse and the young lad . . . how
fare they yonder now?

AFTER DARK

UNDER the blue sky,
And the white clouds sailing high,
Where the gallant wind went by,
A bird sang on—sang on
Till the day (too soon) was done.

And the daylight died
From the fields and the hillside,
And the moorland bare and wide . . .
But the bird sang on—sang on
Long after the light was gone—

Like a voice that said:
“Oh, you who weep your dead,
Be comforted—be comforted!
For the deed lives on—lives on
Long after the life is gone!” . . .

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